

## When was Christ crucified and resurrected?

We first need to realize that God doesn't begin and end days at midnight as we do - that is a humanly devised method of measuring / counting time. Genesis 1:5 tells us quite plainly that God counts a day as beginning with the evening (the night portion) and ending at the next evening - "So the evening [night time] and the morning [daylight] were the first day." God repeats this formula for the entire six days of Creation.

Then, most people have no idea that the Bible talks about *two kinds* of Sabbath days - the normal *weekly* Sabbath day that falls on Saturday, the seventh day of the week (not to be confused with Sunday, which is the first day of the week), and seven *annual* Sabbath days, listed in Leviticus 23 and mentioned in various passages throughout the Bible, that could fall on any day of the week. Because traditional Christianity long ago abandoned these Biblical annual Sabbath days (as well as the weekly Sabbath), for many centuries people have failed to recognize what the Bible plainly and clearly tells us about when Jesus Christ was crucified and resurrected, and why "Good Friday - Easter Sunday" never happened that way.

Most people fail to note that John explicitly tells us that the Sabbath that began at sundown immediately after Jesus was entombed was one of these *annual* Sabbath days. Notice in John 19:31 his explanation that "that Sabbath was a *high day*" - "high day" being a term used to differentiate the seven annual Sabbaths from the regular weekly Sabbath days. The Bible tells us that on the evening before Jesus was condemned and crucified, He kept the Passover with His disciples (Matthew 26:19-20; Mark 14:16-17; Luke 22:13-15). This means He was crucified on the Passover day. Leviticus 23, which lists God's festivals, tells us that on the day after the Passover a separate festival, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, begins (Leviticus 23:5-6). The first day of this Feast is "a holy convocation" on which "no customary work" is to be done (Leviticus 23:7). This day is the first of God's annual Sabbaths. This is the "high day" of which John wrote. Several Bible commentaries, encyclopedias and dictionaries correctly note that John is referring to an annual Sabbath here, rather than the regular weekly Sabbath day. Passover began at sundown and ended the following day at sundown, when this annual Sabbath began. Jesus kept the Passover with His disciples, then was arrested later that night. After daybreak the next day He was questioned before Pontius Pilate, crucified, then hurriedly entombed just before the next sunset when the "high day", the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, began.

Several computer software programmes now exist that enable us to calculate exactly when the Passover and God's other festivals fall in any given year. Those programmes show that in A.D. 31, the year of these events, the Passover meal was eaten on a Tuesday night, and Wednesday sundown marked the beginning of the "high day", the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Therefore, Christ was crucified and entombed on a Wednesday afternoon before sundown, not on a Friday.

There is a seldom-noticed detail in Mark 16:1: "Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him." In that time, if the body of a loved one was placed in a tomb rather than being buried directly in the ground, friends and family would commonly place aromatic

spices in the tomb alongside the body to reduce the smell as the remains decayed. Since Jesus' body was placed in the tomb just before that high-day Sabbath began, the women had no time to buy those spices before the Sabbath. Also, they could not have purchased them on the Sabbath day, as shops were closed. Thus, Mark says, they bought the spices after the Sabbath - "when the Sabbath was past." Notice another revealing detail in Luke 23:55-56: "And the women who had come with [Christ] from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment." That presents a problem. Mark clearly states that the women bought the spices *after* the Sabbath - "when the Sabbath was past." Luke tells us that the women prepared the spices and fragrant oils, after which "they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment." So they bought the spices *after* the Sabbath, and then they prepared the spices *before* resting on the Sabbath. This is a clear contradiction between these two Gospel accounts, unless *two* Sabbaths were involved. Indeed, when we understand that *two different Sabbaths* are mentioned, the problem is solved.

Mark tells us that after the "high day" Sabbath, which began Wednesday evening at sundown, and ended Thursday evening at sundown, the women bought the spices to anoint Jesus' body. Luke then tells us that the women prepared the spices - activity which would have taken place on Friday, and that afterward "they rested on the Sabbath [the normal weekly Sabbath day, observed Friday sunset to Saturday sunset] according to the commandment." By comparing details in both accounts, we can clearly see that two different Sabbaths are mentioned, along with a workday in between. The first Sabbath was a "high day" - the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which fell on a Thursday. The second was the weekly seventh-day Sabbath.

The original Greek in which the Bible was written also plainly tells us that two Sabbath days were involved in these accounts. In Matthew 28:1, where Matthew writes that the women went to the tomb "after the Sabbath", the word "Sabbath" here is actually plural, and should be translated "Sabbaths". Bible versions such as Alfred Marshall's Interlinear Greek-English New Testament, Green's Literal Translation Young's Literal Translation and Ferrar Fenton's Translation, make this clear.

It is clear then that Jesus Christ was crucified and entombed on a Wednesday, just before an *annual* Sabbath began - not the *weekly* Sabbath. John 20:1, as noted earlier, tells us that "on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, *while it was still dark*, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb." The sun had not yet risen - "*it was still dark*", John tells us, when Mary found the tomb empty. Obviously, then, Jesus was not resurrected at sunrise on Sunday morning. So when then? The answer is plain if we simply read the Bible, and Jesus Christ's own words, and accept them for what they say. "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, *so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*", said Jesus (Matthew 12:40). As already proven, Jesus was entombed (placed "in the heart of the earth") just before sundown on a Wednesday. All that is then needed is to count forward. One day and one night brings us to Thursday at sundown. Another day and night brings us to Friday at sundown. A third day and night brings us to Saturday just before sundown.

Therefore, Christ was resurrected on a Saturday afternoon, before sundown, not on a Sunday. According to Jesus Christ's own words He would be resurrected three days and nights after He was entombed, at around the same time - close to sunset. This lines up with the Scriptures - He was already risen and the tomb empty when Mary arrived "while it was still dark" on Sunday morning. No one was around to witness His resurrection (which took place inside a sealed tomb watched over by armed guards), but Jesus Christ's own words and the details recorded in the Bible show that it had to have happened three days and three nights after His burial, close to sunset at the end of the weekly Sabbath.

Therefore, it is impossible to fit three days and three nights between a late Friday burial and a Sunday morning resurrection. The Good Friday - Easter Sunday tradition simply isn't true or Biblical!

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